

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Withdrawn)** A composite biomaterial for preventing surgical adhesions of tissue comprised of at least one hyaluronic acid derivative selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) a benzyl ester of hyaluronic acid wherein 75 to 100% of the carboxyl groups of hyaluronic acid are esterified with a benzyl radical and up to 25% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with the alkyl radical of a C₁₀ to C₂₀ aliphatic alcohol, with the proviso that at least 80% of the carboxyl groups are esterified; and
 - (b) an auto-crosslinked derivative of hyaluronic acid wherein 0.5 to 20% of the carboxyl group of hyaluronic acid are cross-linked to the hydroxyl group of the same or different hyaluronic acid molecule.
2. **(Withdrawn)** The composite biomaterial according to claim 1, wherein said derivative is the total benzyl ester in which all of the carboxyl groups of hyaluronic acid are esterified with a benzyl group.
3. **(Withdrawn)** The composite biomaterial according to claim 1, wherein said derivative is a benzyl ester wherein 80% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with a benzyl group.
4. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said derivative is a benzyl ester wherein 75% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with a benzyl group and the

remaining 25% carboxyl groups are esterified with the aliphatic residue of a C₁₀₋₂₀ aliphatic alcohol.

5. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 4, wherein said alcohol is stearyl or palmitic alcohol.
6. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 1, wherein said auto-crosslinked derivative has 4.5 to 5.0% of the carboxyl groups of the hyaluronic acid molecule cross-linked.
7. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 1 which further comprises a non-biodegradable synthetic polymer.
8. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 7, wherein said synthetic polymer is a member selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyester and polytetrafluoroethylene.
9. **(Withdrawn)** The composite material according to claim 1 in the form of a membrane, a mesh or a woven or non-woven tissue.
10. **(Withdrawn)** The composite biomaterial according to claim 1 in the form of a gel.

11. **(Currently Amended)** A method for preventing surgical adhesions of tissue which comprises applying to tissue involved in surgery a biomaterial comprised of at least one ~~hyaluronic acid derivative selected from the group consisting of:~~

(a) ~~—a benzyl ester of hyaluronic acid wherein 75 to 100% of the carboxyl groups of hyaluronic acid are esterified with a benzyl radical and up to 25% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with the alkyl radical of a C₁₀ to C₂₀ aliphatic alcohol, with the proviso that at least 80% of the carboxyl groups are esterified; and~~

(b) ~~—an auto-crosslinked derivative of an hyaluronic acid with an average molecular weight of 150,000 to 730,000 Daltons, wherein 0.54.5 to 205% of the carboxyl group of hyaluronic acid are cross-linked to the hydroxyl group of the same or different hyaluronic acid molecule, wherein said cross-linked derivative has a viscosity of at least 200 Pa*sec⁻¹.~~

12. **(Withdrawn)** The method according to claim 11, wherein said derivative is the total benzyl ester in which all of the carboxyl groups of hyaluronic acid are esterified with a benzyl group.

13. **(Withdrawn)** The method according to claim 11, wherein said derivative is a benzyl ester wherein 80% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with a benzyl group.

14. **(Withdrawn)** The method according to claim 11, wherein said derivative is a benzyl ester wherein 75% of the carboxyl groups are esterified with a benzyl group and the remaining 25% carboxyl groups are esterified with the aliphatic residue of a C₁₀₋₂₀ aliphatic alcohol.

15. **(Withdrawn)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said alcohol is stearyl or palmitic alcohol.

16. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 11, wherein said viscosity is at least 250 Pa*sec⁻¹ ~~4.5 to 5.0% of the carboxyl groups of said auto-crosslinked derivative has are cross-linked.~~

17. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 11 wherein said biomaterial further comprises a non-biodegradable synthetic polymer.

18. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 17, wherein said synthetic polymer is at least one member selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyester and polytetrafluoroethylene.

19. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 11, wherein said biomaterial is in the form of a gel, a membrane, a mesh or a woven or non-woven tissue.

20. **(Currently Amended)** ~~The biomaterial of~~ method according to Claim 11, wherein said biomaterial further comprises ~~ing~~ a biologically active agent.

21. **(Currently Amended)** The ~~biomaterial of~~method of claim 20 wherein the ~~said~~ biologically active agent is selected from the group consisting of steroidal and non-steroidal antiinflammatories, fibrinolytics, hemostatics, antithrombotics, growth factors, antitumorals, antibacterials, antivirals and antifungals.
22. **(Withdrawn)** The biomaterial of claim 10 wherein the viscosity of said gel is at least 200 Pa* Sec⁻¹.
23. **(Withdrawn)** The biomaterial of claim 10 wherein the viscosity of said gel is at least 300 Pa* Sec⁻¹.
24. **(Original)** The method of claim 11 wherein said surgery is selected from the group consisting of abdominal, laparoscopic , laparotomic, intestinal, gynecologic, abdominalpelvic, peritoneal, urogenital, orthopedic, spinal/dura mater, tendon/nerve, including carpal tunnel, cardiovascular, thoracic, ophtalmic, oncologic, plastic, esthetic, ENT, paranasal sinuses, and transplantation.